

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/016,241

Examiner

Fadey S. Jabr

Applicant(s)

FUJIWARA, YOSHIYASU

Art Unit

3639

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 2/21/2006.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-17.
3. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☒ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☒ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Paul M. Reznick on 3 May 2006.

The application has been amended as follows:

The letter "a" has been deleted from the line, "...in a method of supporting sales and maintenance of a steam traps...", on page 3, line 17 of the specification.

Further, the recitation of "and/or" in line 21 of claim 1 has been deleted. The claim has been rewritten to read "outputting said comparison data for presentation to the customer in at least one of: ~~and/or~~ sales and maintenance activities of the recommended steam traps".

2. The following changes to the drawings have been approved by the examiner and agreed upon by applicant: the new drawings shall correct the misspelling of the word "cconfirmation" to "confirmation" in Figures 4-8. In order to avoid abandonment of the application, applicant must make these above agreed upon drawing changes.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. Claims 1-17 are allowed over the prior art of record.
4. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The closest prior art of record is Yonemura et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,788,849, Spira et al., Pub. No. US2002/0035495 A1, Watson, U.S. Patent No. 6,581,045 B1, and Moore "Cut Steam-Trap Costs; Identifying the best traps for a given application is the key to slashing maintenance costs."

Yonemura et al. discloses a system for monitoring the operation of steam traps, wherein the data representing the operation of the steam traps is transmitted to a host computer. The host computer then displays the summation of the leakage in a plurality of steam traps as well as an analysis of leakage in terms of monetary cost. This data is also used to determine the time required for repair or replacement of the steam traps.

Spira et al. discloses a method for providing an assessment of the maintenance and technical service needs of a plant, wherein the services are provided through the life cycle of the plant.

Watson discloses an asset management system for maintaining, evaluating and managing the physical condition of assets. Watson also provides data for facilitating alternative repair/replacement decisions.

Moore discloses a ratio, failures/inspections, for a given trap. The ratio is helpful in gauging the efficacy of a given inspection frequency.

As per claims 1 and 9, the closest prior art of record taken either individually or in combination with other prior art of record fails to teach or suggest a method for calculating,

Art Unit: 3639

based on said model confirmation result data, a second total steam loss amount, which comprises aggregation of differences between inherent steam leak amounts of the existing steam traps under their normal working conditions and inherent steam leak amounts of recommended steam traps under their normal working conditions. Claims 2-8 depend from claim 1, claims 10-17 depend from claim 9 and are therefore allowable.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Fadey S. Jabr whose telephone number is (571) 272-1516. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon. - Fri. 7:30am to 4:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on (571) 272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Art Unit: 3639

Fadey S Jabr
Examiner
Art Unit 3639

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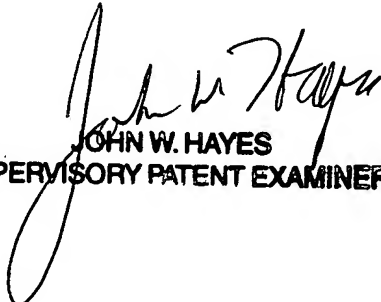
Please address mail to be delivered by the United States Postal Service (USPS) as follows:

**Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231**

or faxed to:

(571) 273-1516 [Informal/Draft communications, labeled "PROPOSED" or "DRAFT"]

Hand delivered responses should be brought to the Customer Service Window, Randolph Building, 401 Dulany Street, Alexandria, VA 22314


**JOHN W. HAYES
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER**